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Centers for Disease Control
And Prevention (CDC)
National Institute for Occupational
Safety and Health – ALOSH
1095 Willowdale Road
Morgantown, WV 26505-2888

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Dear Sir or Madam:

Recently, a number of dental laboratory workers have been diagnosed with silicosis. Silicosis is a chronic, disabling, sometimes fatal, occupational disease of the lung caused by inhaling silica dust. Although silicosis is incurable, it *is* preventable. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) is distributing the enclosed brochure to inform dental laboratories nationwide of the risk of silicosis and approaches for preventing the disease in dental technicians.

The brochure, produced by the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services, describes the tasks (such as casting, sandblasting, grinding, and cleaning) in a dental laboratory that may cause silica exposure. It also describes general approaches on how to control those exposures. The brochure supplements NIOSH reports and publications on the prevention of silicosis. Additional information on silica and how to prevent exposures can be found at:

<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/pdfs/silicax.pdf>.

The New Jersey brochure also provides information on other potential hazards dental technicians may encounter, such as methyl methacrylate and beryllium. Other information on worker hazards in dentistry can be found at: <http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/dentistry/index.html>.

Like New Jersey, the states of California, Michigan, New York, and Ohio collaborate with NIOSH to address silicosis and can provide assistance. State contact information can be found at: <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/silica/state-contacts.html>. For additional state assistance concerning potential hazards in your dental laboratory, you can also contact the OSHA Consultation Service in your state. Contact information can be found at: <http://www.osha.gov/html/consultation.html>.

We hope you find this information useful. For more information about this or other occupational safety and health concerns, call toll-free: 1-800-35-NIOSH, or go to the NIOSH web site at: <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/homepage.html>.

Sincerely,

Gregory R. Wagner, M.D.
Director
Division of Respiratory Disease Studies

Enclosure